I like to think that my educational philosophy can be captured in a simple aphorism attributed to an anonymous speaker: “All that I do not love, I have overlooked.” This expression invites a reflective existence. It encourages learning. It believes in the beauty and potential of all things and that all people can learn*.* That demands that nothing be left unexplored for its value and place in existence. Yet, it recognizes failures and shortcomings, but with a solution provided. I believe education is all those things.

With my aphorism in mind, I believe in high expectations for all learners including myself as a teacher. I believe the most important aspect of education and learning is providing students the opportunities to discover and explore themselves and others. It is the power of this exploration that makes me want to be an English language arts teacher. It is the most important skill students need to be participants in exploration of the world around them and their self. Language is a tool, but language is also an art and science. I want students to know literature and writing as the science and art that it is. I want them to own their language. I want their capacity with the English language to be more than functional literacy. I want them to take responsibility for the development of their soul. I want them to be life-long readers who listen and question what conversations whatever they are reading participates in. I want students to be writers, to see expression of the individual and their soul.

My students will not learn just language arts. They will learn who they are through language arts. They will be free to develop their personhood in all its mystique and mess. They shall develop a respect for individuals as members of a wider conversation. They will recognize the sacristy of their selves and their peers. I want them to be participants in the world as transformative agents. I want them to listen to conversations and arguments of the past, recognize their own discourse, and where they belong in it.

I believe with all my heart, the education has the power to transform this world and bring the greatest amount and love for the least, the lost, and lonely. As an educator, I have a responsibility to all of my students. It is with all my students in mind that I will structure and facilitate learning experiences. I believe in a noisy classroom. I want my classroom to be a think-tank of free-flowing ideas and expression. I want students to debate. In order for learners to debate though, they need to feel respected and comfortable to express themselves as individuals. The major characteristics of organization in my classroom will be flexibility (especially in favor of student interest), optimism, self-reflection, and innovation. While I believe in sound structure and regularity with certain principles in the classroom, I also want the format of my classroom organization to not look the same for every student. Most comfortable as a facilitator negotiating relationships and the movement of ideas, I am developing myself as a democratic leader because I believe in the principles and remarkability of autonomy and shared responsibility for leadership.

Life is full of unanswered questions. I want my students to leave my classroom better prepared to explore the world. For that reason my classroom will not shy away from social justice and racial, socio-economic, gender, political discourse and inequality. As an English teacher, student dialogue, debate, and critical thinking skills used to develop personal meaning through experience is the foundation of what education should do for all students. Those are all the essential skills students need to be change agents that do not overlook anything. Diversity and respect for the individual and their expressions of learning are what makes education the most meaningful for individuals to take with them for the rest of their life. Their ownership of classroom organization that involves their input, their work and access to diverse materials, learning focuses that are meaningful and question their understandings of the world and their peers, and classroom climate that values the student and each other for all their diverse experience above all else, control what my teaching style, and disciplinary approach.

Students need to effectively, imaginatively, structurally, creatively, and daringly use English language arts to their advantage to express their values, positions, and perspectives and understand other individual and group values, positions, and perspectives too to be agents of transforming influence.